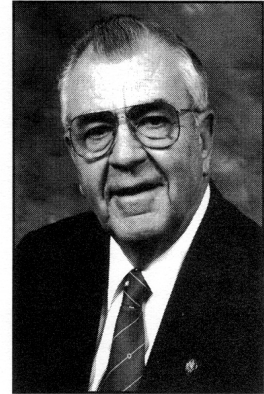


News

Congressman Herbert H. Bateman
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**STATEMENT OF THE
HONORABLE HERBERT H. BATEMAN
FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP OF HR 4205
REPORT OF THE MILITARY READINESS SUBCOMMITTEE**

I am pleased to report to the committee on the actions taken by the Military Readiness Subcommittee on its portion of the fiscal year 2001 Defense Authorization Bill.

Much has been said lately about the military's declining readiness and how absolutely essential adequate readiness funding is to the sustainment of the readiness of our armed forces to protect America's security interests and global leadership. Although the Administration continues to recognize that there are serious readiness problems in the military services and presented a budget request for fiscal year 2001 that reports an increase in overall spending, our military leaders, nevertheless, have reported to us that the budget request is over \$16 billion short in many critical areas. Once again, we find a budget request that is long on rhetoric and short on substance.

The budget request for fiscal year 2001 for operation and maintenance represents an increase in spending of approximately \$3 billion over current spending levels, but none of this increased spending is applied to critical readiness accounts. Of that \$3 billion, increasing fuel prices account for \$1.2 billion of the increase, and the remaining \$1.8 billion represents inflation assumptions of about one percent.

The committee carefully reviewed the unfunded requirements provided by the chiefs of the military services for next year. Most of these unfunded requirements are for day-to-day military operations, spare parts, depot maintenance, and facility maintenance – accounts that should be fully funded every year. Despite our efforts last year to significantly increase defense spending, the services' fiscal year 2001 shortfalls have grown by more than \$5 billion over just the past year. In addition, the service chiefs now estimate their shortfalls in the fiscal year 2001– 2005 period at \$84.2 billion – more than double their February 1999 estimate of \$37.9 billion for the same five-year period.

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After a thorough review of the budget request, and after a series of hearings on a wide range of readiness issues, the subcommittee recommends a package of readiness improvements that will provide immediate readiness improvements. Based on the service chief's unfunded priority lists, the mark before you provides significant funding increases for combat equipment depot maintenance, ship repair, training and training center improvements, repair parts and facility maintenance.

In addition to funding increases, the subcommittee mark includes several legislative provisions that will substantially improve how the DOD conducts its day-to-day business. The mark contains a provision that would require a report to Congress on efforts to resolve serious readiness issues identified by the Department in their readiness review process; a provision that would require DOD to formulate a strategic plan to arrest the chronic shortage of funding for facility maintenance throughout the Department of Defense; and a provision that would extend the requirement to notify Congress of funding transfers from critical readiness accounts. The mark also contains a series of provisions dealing with the management of civilian personnel of the Department of Defense.

The mark, again this year, includes a provision that would authorize \$35 million for impact aid for local school districts with large concentrations of children from military families and a provision to expedite their receipt of the funds.

Within the resources available, the mark before you represents what I believe will achieve the goals that we all share. That goal is to provide what is required to improve and ensure force readiness and improve the quality of life for the men and women of our armed forces.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ortiz for the support and cooperation he has given me again this year, and all the other members of the subcommittee for their patience and support.

I would also like to thank the subcommittee staff: Pete Steffes, Joe Boessen, Tom Hawley, Mary Ellen Fraser, Dudley Tademy, and Diane Bowman for all their hard work and long hours.

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